

if they're willing to go out and meet the same standard of hard work and long hours that the AmeriCorps volunteers meet, they will also become eligible for the scholarship. That could bring 50,000 more young people into the kind of community service we see with Youth Build and with the National School and Community Corps.

And finally, let me say, you know what the project was that kids were working on in the class I just visited? Every one of them was talking about how they like to serve. Every one of those young children had to say, "I like to help. I like to do something," and then draw a picture of what they like to do. No one is too young to serve. No one is too old to serve.

We are the most diverse country in the world with a big democracy. We have people from all different races, all different ethnic groups, all different religions. But when we live together and work together and reach across the lines that divide us, we are the most interesting, the most powerful, the most vital country in human history. If we serve, that's the kind of country we'll be in the 21st century for all these children. That's my promise to you, and I want it to be your promise to yourselves.

God bless you, and keep it up.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:46 p.m. at the George Washington Nebinger Elementary School. In his remarks, he referred to students Latifah Beard, Tiffany Way, and Daryl Way.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus

April 25, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 23732(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question. The previous submission covered progress through November 30, 1996. The current submission covers the period December 1, 1996, through January 31, 1997.

As I noted to you in my last report, we have been very concerned about the decision by the Government of Cyprus to purchase the SA-10 anti-aircraft missile system and the resulting threats of a military strike by Turkey. The United States and its allies tried hard to persuade Cyprus that purchasing these missiles was a step leading away from negotiations, which remain the only way to solve the Cyprus problem. In the context of the already excessive levels of armaments on Cyprus and last summer's intercommunal violence, the government's decision to go forward with the purchases was doubly regrettable. Additionally, I remain disappointed that the parties have not implemented alternative measures to reduce tensions along the cease-fire lines. Despite these clear setbacks, I believe the decision by Cyprus, at our urging,

to defer importation of components of the SA-10 system for 16 months is a step in the right direction and provides us with a window of opportunity to make progress in resolving the Cyprus issue.

As Secretary Albright noted at her confirmation hearings, the parties need to take further steps to reduce tensions and improve the climate for negotiations. The United States remains committed to promoting a Cyprus settlement but needs the full cooperation of the parties, including Greece and Turkey, to achieve our mutual goals. We continue to see that the only way forward is direct, good faith negotiations between the parties themselves. The United States will continue to work toward bringing these negotiations about.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 29.

Statement on U.S. Sentencing Commission Action on Penalties for Drug Offenses

April 29, 1997

I commend the Sentencing Commission for moving forward with recommendations to Congress to reduce the disparity between crack and powder cocaine penalties. My administration will give them very serious consideration. I have asked Director McCaffrey and Attorney General Reno to review the recommendations and to report back to me in 60 days. I look forward to working with the Congress on this issue.

In October 1995, I signed legislation disapproving the Sentencing Commission's recommendation to equalize penalties for crack and powder cocaine distribution by dramatically reducing the penalties for crack. I believe that was the wrong approach then and would be the wrong approach now.

Current law creates a substantial disparity between sentences for crack and powder cocaine. This disparity has led to a perception of unfairness and inconsistency in the Federal criminal justice system.

The sentencing laws must continue to reflect that crack cocaine is a more harmful form of cocaine. The Sentencing Commission's new recommendations do so. Trafficking in crack, and the violence it fosters, has a devastating impact on communities across America, especially inner-city communities. Any change in penalties must ensure that more dangerous offenders receive tougher sentences.

As I have stated before, however, some adjustment to the cocaine penalty structure is warranted as a matter of sound criminal justice policy. Federal prosecutors should target mid- and high-level drug traffickers, rather than low-level drug offenders. An adjustment to the penalty scheme will help ensure this allocation of resources and make our Federal efforts in fighting drugs more effective. That is why the legislation I signed directed the Sentencing Commission to undertake additional review of these issues and to report back with new recommendations.

I am also pleased that the Sentencing Commission has increased penalties for methamphetamine offenses pursuant to the legislation which I signed into law last year. This law asked the Commission to toughen penalties on this emerging drug to prevent the kind of epidemic we saw in the 1980's with cocaine use. We will carefully study these new penalties.

My administration has fought to stop drug abuse and its destructive consequences. Overall, drug use in the United States has fallen dramatically—by half in 15 years. And cocaine use has dramatically decreased since the high point in 1985—the number of current cocaine users is down by 74 percent over the last decade. While these are encouraging figures, I am fully committed to doing more to keep bringing drug use down—particularly among our children.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Jose Aznar of Spain and an Exchange With Reporters

April 30, 1997

President Clinton. Well, let me begin by welcoming President Aznar and his group of leaders from Spain. Spain has set an example for the world now for quite a few years in its transition to a remarkable and healthy and vibrant democracy, which produced your recent election, and has been a very valuable ally and partner of the United States in Bosnia and now in Guatemala and, of course, is going to be the host

of our summit on NATO in July. So we're looking very much forward to being there. And we appreciate you very much.

Yes, we have our fingers crossed. [*Laughter*]

Budget Agreement

Q. Have you got a budget deal, Mr. President? And why did Chelsea pick Stanford? [*Laughter*]